DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 452 615 EA 031 032

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TITLE The Effectiveness of Block Scheduling.
PUB DATE 2000-11-00
NOTE 82p.; Master of Arts Action Research Project, Saint Xavier University Field-Based Masters Program.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses (040) -- Tests/Questionnaires (160)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Achievement; *Attendance; *Block Scheduling; *Educational Environment; *Educational Improvement; High Schools; Instructional Improvement; Questionnaires; School Schedules; School Surveys; Student Behavior; *Suspension; Time Factors (Learning)

ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for the exploration of block scheduling. The targeted population consists of high school students in a growing, middle-class community, located in a suburban setting of a large mid-western city. The historical background of block scheduling is documented through data gathered using attendance reports, student referrals, suspensions, grade distribution data, and parent, student, and teacher surveys. Student attendance was an area that the school administration assessed for possible improvement. Another problem area addressed was to seek a calmer, safer, more academic school climate. The administration also sought to enhance student achievement. Block scheduling strategies consisting of changes in instructional strategies, time management, staff development, opportunity for innovations, resulted in a more flexible and productive school environment. Project result data indicated percentage increases in attendance, a general declining tendency in referrals with the same tendencies in suspensions, and no significant change in the percentage of grade distribution. Surveys indicate a positive feeling with regard to keeping block scheduling within the school system. The appendix contains questionnaires and percentage responses from students, parents, and teachers. (Contains 25 references.) (MLF)

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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF BLOCK SCHEDULING

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An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the

School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of Masters of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

Saint Xavier University

Field-Based Masters Program

Chicago, Illinois

November 2000

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ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for the exploration of block scheduling. The targeted population consists of high school students in a growing, middle class community, located in a suburban setting of a large Midwestern city. The historical background of block scheduling is documented through data gathered using attendance reports, student referrals, number of suspensions, grade distribution data and parent, student and teacher surveys.

Analysis of the historical background revealed that attendance was an area that the school administration assessed for possible improvement. Another problem area addressed was to seek a calmer, safer, more academic school climate at the targeted high school. The administration also sought to enhance student achievement.

A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the overall effectiveness of block scheduling consisting of changes in instructional strategies, time management, staff development, opportunity for innovations, and a more flexible and productive school environment.

Project result data indicated percentage increases in attendance, a general declining tendency in referrals with the same tendencies in suspensions, and no significant change in the percentage of grade distribution. Surveys indicate a positive feeling with regard to keeping block scheduling within the school system of the targeted high school.

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CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH STATEMENT AND CONCERN

General Statement of Research

The teachers and students of the targeted high school are experiencing the fourth year of block scheduling. Exploration of this innovation was conducted using attendance reports, student referrals, number of suspensions, grade distribution data and parent, student and teacher surveys.

School Context

The targeted high school opened in the south suburban area of a large metropolitan city in 1972. It is the newest of three high schools, accommodating grades 9-12. The total student enrollment is 1150, with an African-American population of 66% while the white population is 29.6%. Other minority population is 4.5% (School Report Card, 1998) (See Figure 1).

TOTAL POPULATION	1150
WHITE	29.6%
AFRICAN-AMERICAN	66%
HISPANIC	2.8%
OTHER MINORITY	1.7%
LOW INCOME	21.2%
ATTENDANCE	94.6%
MOBILITY	11.3%
TURANCY	1.1%

Figure 1. Student population.

The average teaching experience within the district is 18.5 years, with an average teacher salary of $60,329. The district teachers work with an average class size of 17.0 students (School Report Card, 1998) (See Figure 2).

TOTAL TEACHER POPULATION	188
WHITE	81.6%
AFRICAN-AMERICAN	15.8%
HISPANIC	1.6%
OTHER MINORITY	1.1%
AVERAGE EXPERIENCE	18.5 YRS.
EDUCATION: BACHELORS	31.5%
MASTERS	68.5%
AVERAGE SALARY	$60,329
AVERAGE CLASS SIZE	17.0 %
INSTUCTIONAL EXPENDITURE PER PUPIL	$5,045

Figure 2. District teacher population.

The following figure indicates standardized test scores for the targeted school and district in three levels. Level one indicates the percent of students who do not meet state goals for learning, the level two scores indicate the percent of students who meet state goals and level three indicates the percent of students who exceed state goals (School Report Card, 1998) (See Figure 3).

	% Do not meet goals	% Meet goals	% Exceed goals
Grade 10 Reading			
School	27	53	20
District	32	48	19
Mathematics			
School	31	56	13
District	31	56	13
Writing			
School	33	48	19
District	45	41	13
Grade 11 Science			
School	33	56	11
District	27	61	12
Social Studies			
School	18	71	10
District	15	70	15

Figure 3. 1997-98 State standardized average scores. Students in the targeted school are scoring at or above district averages in all three levels of the standardized measures.

The targeted high school is situated on approximately twenty acres of land close to a major expressway. It is a two story building with a central facility and two classroom wings. The school has a combined open cafeteria and locker concept. Before school, during passing periods and after school, much of the student population funnels into this confined area where their lockers are located. The central facility consists of the main office complex, media center and attendance office.

Of the three high schools in the district the targeted high school is the only campus on block scheduling. The schedule chosen requires students to attend eight classes per semester, each of which is 85 minutes in length. The system is designed on an A/B pattern alternating four classes each day. This is traditionally known as an Eight Block.

The Surrounding Community

The student population is drawn from two large communities in the area. The smaller of the two communities has a population of 11,538. The homes in this community range in price from $80,000 to $300,000, with a median home value of $99,929. The residents have a median family income of $54,741. The targeted high school is located in the community along with two elementary school districts and no private schools. The tax base is a light industrial park. There is room for housing development and population growth (www.chicagotribune.com).

The larger of the two communities in the district has a population of 12,115. The homes range in price from $100,000 to $200,000 with a median home value of $117,637. The residents have a median family income of $67,614. The students from this community also attend the targeted high school, coming from two elementary districts. There are also several private schools located in the district. The tax base is an expanding commercial growth. The community is on the verge of a major increase in housing and industry (www.chicagotribune.com).

A major issue in the two communities surrounds the necessity for the district to build a theater complex at the targeted high school. The other two high schools in the district have theaters built into the school structure. Figure 4 illustrates the important facts of the two communities (See Figure 4).

	SMALL COMMUNITY	LARGE COMMUNITY
POPULATION	11,538	12,115
MEDIAN HOME VALUE	$99,929	$117,637
MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME	$54,741	$67,614
SCHOOL DISTRICTS	HIGH SCHOOL	HIGH SCHOOL
	ELEMENTARY	ELEMENTARY
	ELEMENTARY	ELEMENTARY

Figure 4. Community profile.

National Context of the Research Statement and Concern

Historically our schools reflect a traditional scheduling that represents a time and an era from the past. Today's educators and researchers are looking for approaches that will substantiate the knowledge they are gleaning from brain research, educational theories and recognition of the plight of administrators and teachers. The National Education Commission (1994, as cited by Eric Digest, paragraph 8) states, "Schools will have the design flaw as long as their organization is based on the assumption that all students can learn on the same schedule." Where do we start the search? Who has the answers?

The realization that traditional scheduling is no longer adequate has surfaced among the literature and writings in the educational field for many years. Reflected is the hectic pace, impersonal relationships, and "inefficient instructional environment," states Carroll (1994, as

cited by Eric Digest, paragraph 6) not allowing enough time to probe ideas in depth, and fails to provide teachers with opportunity for a variety of teaching methodologies. Many educators have been looking at block scheduling as an answer to some of the complex problems brought out by the traditional setting.

What is block scheduling? Cawelti (1994) defines block scheduling as dividing the school day into large chunks of time allowing for fewer classes per day. During the extended class period teachers have an opportunity to expand their use of instructional methodologies and research new approaches in time management to enrich student's learning experience. Academic achievement is the anticipated outcome to block scheduling initiatives. A successful block program will provide for increased teacher and student morale, as well as, stimulation of innovations in teaching methods such as multiple learning styles, and an overall improved school climate. This study looks at the effects block scheduling has on student achievement, attendance, referrals, suspensions and the overall school environment.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

According to the literature, a restructuring movement in high schools was causing many educators to look at the way time was utilized in schools to enhance contemporary instructional strategies. In his study of American high schools, Gordon Cawelti (1994), found that traditional scheduling patterns discourage using a variety of learning activities and probing ideas in depth. A six-period traditional schedule was limiting opportunities for elective programs, failing to give teachers time to develop alternative strategies and assessments, failing to personalize the high school environment thereby limiting the quality of teacher-student interaction, and not engaging many students in active learning situations. Carrol (1994, as cited by Eric Digest, paragraph 6) states that the traditional six-period schedule "produces a hectic, impersonal, inefficient instructional environment".

Referencing the National Education Commission on Time and Learning (1994), our students are becoming "Prisoners of Time".

> If experience, research and common sense teach nothing else, they confirm the truism that people learn at different rates, and in different ways with different subjects...The boundaries of student growth are defined by schedules for bells, buses, and vacations instead of standards for students and learning. (as cited by www.ed.gov/pubs, paragraph 4)

Hence, many schools across the country are attempting to address such issues by seriously looking at the way time is used each and every school day.

Literature repeatedly points to specific concerns in the traditional school setting. Canady and Rettig (1995), detail problems inherent in the traditional high school schedule. Single-period high school schedules, they contend,

- contribute to the impersonal nature of high schools;
- exacerbate discipline problems;
- result in a hectic and fragmented school day, especially when combined with increased graduation requirements;
- limit instructional possibilities for teachers;
- do not permit flexible time to meet individual students learning needs;
- do not result in "user-friendly" workplaces for staff.

An additional problem facing traditional classroom teachers is one of student-teacher relationships. As John O'Neil (1995), states, "...it's hard for teachers to give a lot of individual attention to each student because the period is so short and because teachers may see as many as 150 students each day "(p. 12). As a result, "a kid can go several days without having a meaningful interaction with a teacher" (Carroll,1994, p. 106).

Consequently, schools are struggling with issues that have far reaching consequences. Canady & Rettig (1993), suggest, "the traditional six- or seven-period schedule found in most American high schools is being subjected to intense scrutiny. Structures that were once thought to be unchangeable are beginning to undergo revision" (p. 310).

The targeted high school experienced many of the problems, associated with a traditional instructional format, that are seen nation wide. These problems prompted a visionary administrator to research approaches in school restructuring. A committee of administrators, faculty, students and parents evaluated the most effective potential restructuring formats to meet the needs of the targeted high school.

Prior to block scheduling the high school used a traditional six-period day with a traditional teaching style. As schools across the country began changing to block, the administrator sent teams out to investigate some of these schools. Representatives from schools on block schedules came in for panel discussions during an inservice to answer questions and give information regarding block.

Inservices provided a forum in which very sincere feelings were expressed on both sides that revealed the complexity of the issue. These sessions provided for transitions to block involving lesson planning, teaching strategies and new techniques. Forums, surveys, committees and voting all were part of the process leading to a two year pilot program. During the pilot initiation the program was continually being evaluated and re-worked to fine tune for a smooth transition. After the two years a vote was taken by faculty and students. A majority voted to continue with the block schedule.

The two years prior to the pilot program were a good indication and representation of the kinds of problems that led to the block decision. Attendance was an area that the school administration assessed for possible improvement. (See Figures 5 & 6) (Appendices A & B)

Month	1994-1995	1995-1996
August/September	96.1	94.9
October	94.8	93.2
November	93.2	93.1
December	92.7	94.2
January	92.5	94.7
February	92.2	92.0
March	93.3	92.9
April	93.2	92.1
May/June	93.8	92.8
Total	93.8	93.7

Figure 5. Percentage of students in attendance by month and year.

Information in attendance records indicated that the two years prior to block reflected a consistency in the lower-to-mid ninetieth percentile. Administration sought to increase

average student daily attendance through the use of block scheduling to a desirable level of mid-to-upper ninetieth percentile.

	1994-1995	1995-1996
First Quarter	95.5	94.1
Second Quarter	93.3	93.8
First Semester	94.4	94.0
Third Quarter	93.0	93.0
Fourth Quarter	93.4	92.5
Second Semester	93.2	92.9
Total	93.8	93.7

Figure 6. Percentage of students in attendance by quarter and semester.

Another problem area the administration addressed was to seek a calmer, safer, more academic school climate at the targeted high school. The overall school environment indicated a need for change. The administration, faculty and parents were pursuing methods to overcome the negative atmosphere of the school. Fighting, disruptive behavior, frequent student to student contact, and more, led to high levels of student referrals and suspensions. (Appendices C, D & E) Locker area arrangement and hallway activity produces the environment for this conflict. (See Figures 7 & 8).

	1994-1995	1995-1996
August/September	501	567
October	715	510
November	564	524
December	366	383
January	486	336
February	614	605
March	657	568
April	349	353
May/June	609	438
Totals	4861	4284

Figure 7. Number of referrals by month.

A range indicating an excessive number of referrals are seen in 1994-95, from October into

February, March and May/June. In 1995-96 referrals dropped on the whole, however, trends in months with elevated levels were consistent throughout.

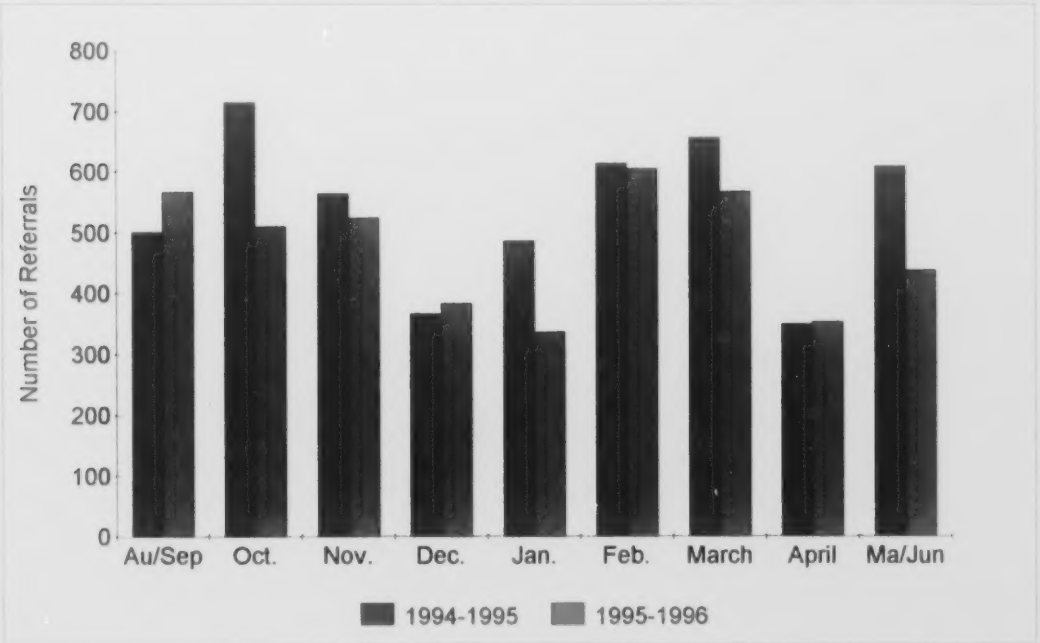

Figure 8. Number of referrals by month for 1994-1995 and 1995-1996.

Some student behaviors warrented further action beyond referrals. Incidents of gross misconduct are referred for possible suspension through the Dean's office. The administration persued block scheduling as a means of reducing the high numbers of referrals and suspensions. (Appendices C, D & E)

	1994-95	1995-96
Aug/Sep	17	39
October	25	33
November	22	38
December	17	23
January	24	9
February	33	28
March	45	36
April	5	22
May/June	46	14
Total	234	242

Figure 9. Number of students suspended during the 1994-95 and 1995-96 school years. Totals for the two years were very close and the monthly reports reflected some surprising inconsistencies for unknown reasons.

	1994-95	1995-96
Aug/Sep	85.5	218
October	126	230
November	99	154
December	95	57
January	96	42
February	173	110
March	262	182
April	17	72
May/June	263	36
Total	1216	1101

Figure 10. Number of suspension days during the 1994-95 and 1995-96 school years.

The administration of the targeted high school also sought to enhance student achievement. (Appendices F & G) Their hope was to focus on long term, continuous improvement. The need was to substantially lower the number of D's and F's, and to shift the remaining grades to higher levels. The following figures reflect the grade distribution data for the two years prior to block scheduling.

	Quarter 1				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals	1831	2021	1515	505	416
Percent	29.1	32.1	24.1	8	6.6
	Quarter 2				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals	1683	1810	1574	726	540
Percent	26.6	28.6	24.9	11.5	8.5
	Semester 1				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals	1691	1930	1672	721	350
Percent	26.6	30.3	26.3	11.3	5.5
	Quarter 3				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals	1800	1943	1465	616	476
Percent	28.6	30.8	23.3	9.8	7.6
	Quarter 4				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals	1689	1787	1615	734	486
Percent	26.8	28.3	25.6	11.6	7.7
	Semester 2				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals	1687	1867	1670	822	297
Percent	26.6	29.4	26.3	13	4.7

Figure 11. Comparative grade distribution data for school year 1994-1995.

The numbers indicate that the percentage of B's are consistantly higher with the percentage of A's followed by C's, D's and F's.

	Quarter 1				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals	1603	1907	1441	496	360
Percent	27.6	32.8	24.8	8.5	6.2
	Quarter 2				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals	1580	1714	1468	634	436
Percent	27.1	29.4	25.2	10.9	7.5
	Semester 1				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals	1555	1787	1618	640	287
Percent	26.4	30.4	27.5	10.9	4.9
	Quarter 3				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals	1626	1846	1376	555	432
Percent	27.9	31.6	23.6	9.5	7.4
	Quarter 4				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals	1575	1695	1413	687	425
Percent	27.2	29.2	24.4	11.9	7.3
	Semester 2				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals	1584	1767	1515	715	269
Percent	27.1	30 3	25.9	12.1	4.6

Figure 12. Comparative grade distribution data for school year 1995-1996.

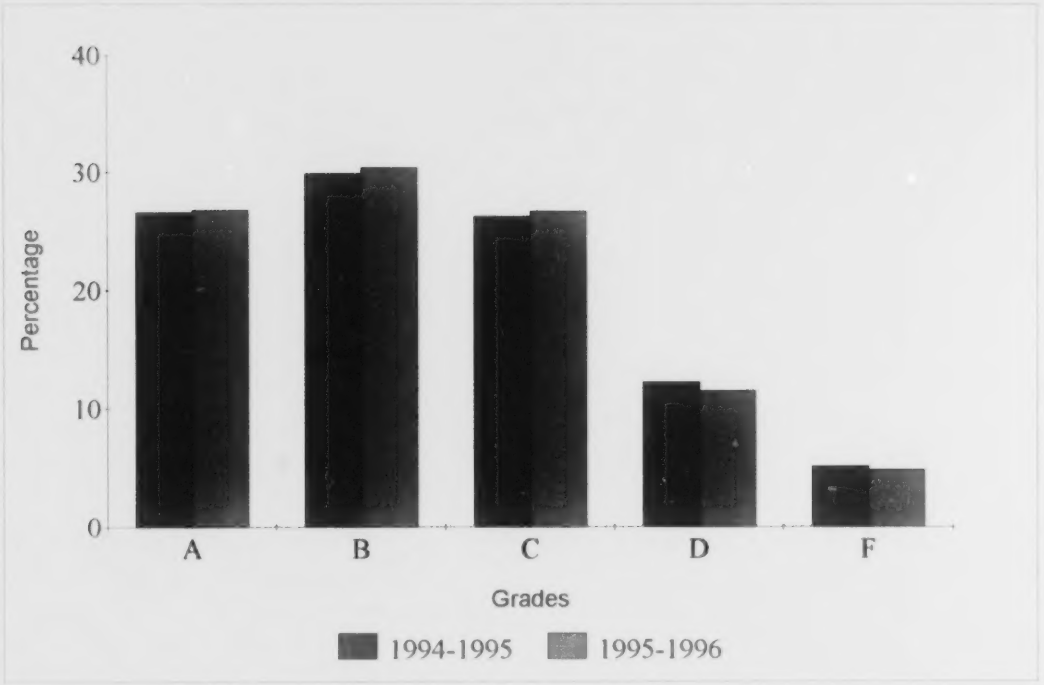

Figure 13. Comparative percentages of grade distribution data.

Figure 13 is a graphic compilation of the grade percentages reflected in figures 11 and 12. In referring to the graph, no significant difference occurs in the two years prior to block scheduling. Grades were consistently lower than was desired.

The overall school climate at the targeted high school, prior to block scheduling, reflected many of the problems associated with a traditional daily schedule. Problems indicative of school climate were low attendance and high numbers of student referrals and suspensions. (Appendices A-E) Another area of concern was that of student achievement. These areas showed problem patterns; whereby, administrators decided to re-evaluate the entire school process which led to a move into block scheduling.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

The block schedule format is an increasingly common alternative to the traditional high school schedule of a six-to-eight period day. This innovation is gaining the attention of administrators and teachers in high schools across the country. There are several different forms of block scheduling, but it always involves longer class periods designed to improve instruction and to increase student learning (Canady & Rettig,1995).

The idea of block scheduling is clearly one of the fastest growing and most successful restructuring initiatives in American schools today. Research suggests that by the year 2000 more than 50% of the nations high schools will be moving toward a scheduling change and many educational experts believe that eventually as many as 75% of the American high schools will implement some form of alternate scheduling (Lammel, 1996). As block scheduling gains in popularity many educators are asking if the benefits of block scheduling are worth the effort.

> Block schedules provide opportunities for teachers to change their instructional strategies so that students become more active and successful learners. There is a growing body of evidence from experiences with high school block scheduling that strongly supports the notion that with proper staff development and careful schedule design the overall school environment becomes more positive and productive. There

> is also evidence that many teachers increase their personal contacts with students,. Furthermore, when curricular and instructional issues are addressed appropriately, achievement in many schools improves, as measured by factors such as reduced failure rates, increased number of students on honor rolls, and higher test scores (Canady and Rettig, 1998, p. VI).

During a five year study at Wasson High School in Colorado Springs, Colorado, the findings indicate that the average daily attendance rate increased from 91.7% to 93.9%, also an increase in the percentage of students on the honor roll from 20.8% to 26.5%, and a decrease in failure rate from 31.0% to an average of 25.7%.

Many new innovations have been developed in the areas of instruction, curriculum, time and staff development due to block scheduling.

> Block scheduling can be a catalyst for classroom innovation. The longer class periods benefit teachers who use innovative methods that do not fit the traditional schedule, encourage teachers who merely "stand and deliver" to develop better interaction with their students, and allow teachers to accommodate students' different learning needs with appropriate teaching strategies (O'Neil, 1995, p.12).

Block scheduling, by it's very nature, provides the opportunity for innovation. The traditional lecture basis for disseminating information is wholly inadequate and doesn't allow for individual student special learning needs. The time element opens dialogue in areas not before expanded or expanded in ways that may not have been thought possible.

> Perhaps the answers lie within two realms: instructional strategies and curricular frameworks. The instructional strategies that seem most appropriate for the learner-centered approach to block scheduling include the cooperative learning structure that ensures active learning, the incorporation of graphic organizers as tools for small group interactions, the multiple intelligences approach that taps the full

> range of human potential, and the focus on higher-order thinking that promotes rigor and challenge in student problem solving (Fogarty, 1995, p.12).

This focus on students' learning points up the fact that some students need more time to learn than others, and some students need less.

Many researchers include team teaching, interdisciplinary teaching, classroom and time management, student assessment and curriculum integration as topics for very necessary staff development. According to O'Neil (1995) teachers integrate group work, hands-on-projects, other strategies aimed at encouraging student involvement and more emphasis on process in the classroom.

> Exploring Howard Gardner's work on multiple intelligences raises teachers' awareness to students' differing strengths and aptitudes. When teachers design learning activities that accommodate linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal tendencies, they truly begin to steer on a new course of instructional delivery (Wyatt, 1996, p.16).

Fogarty (1995) states that: "Block scheduling permits, and, in fact, promotes this kind of multidimensional learning" (p.14).

> Teachers reported that they liked having more time to give students individual assistance, opportunities to get to know the students personally; time for more creative and meaningful student work; and the ability to structure a full lesson, to introduce a topic or concept, discuss it, and bring it to closure (Buckman, King, Ryan, 1995, p.18).

Longer periods allow the students to spend time in specific content areas in order to develop communication and critical thinking skills. Teachers enjoy a twofold benefit by having additional time with each student and reducing the total number of students in class each day (Schoenstein as cited by Brett, 1996). Not only does the student benefit from improved

relationships with their teachers but the collaborative instructional approach allows students more interaction with each other (Bowman, 1998). According to Hottenstein and Malatesta, (1993), "One of the key benefits was that teachers became more intimately involved on a daily basis with helping individual students in the classroom. The instruction became much more student-centered rather than teacher-centered" (p.28). Findings from this report also indicate that due to the longer class time teachers became more intensely involved helping students on an individual basis. Further, block scheduling provided an opportunity for teachers to move from teacher-centered lecture format to innovative student-centered teaching strategies.

"Many teachers began to use cooperative learning more extensively and had the time to consider student learning styles, which they had neither the time nor the inclination to do under the old time system". Marshak, (1997), also has an academic view point in terms of relationships in the classroom:

> A key indicator of the success of block period classes is the level of student involvement in the learning. In block periods student boredom or disengagement cannot be hidden, nor can teacher boredom or ennui. Block periods challenge teachers both to be involved in their new, larger roles as leaders rather than information sources and to create classrooms where students are consistently engaged in their learning (p.3).

More flexible and productive classroom environment is achieved through larger blocks of time, as well as, more opportunities to use varied and interactive teaching methods. Many researchers, Sturgis (1995) among them, believe block to offer more effective use of school time, increased number of course offerings, decreased class size, reduced number of students encountered by a teacher daily, and a teachers ability to integrate more process-oriented strategies. Additional benefits in time blocking are the students engagement in hands-on learning experiences and mastery of discipline content. Flexibility in accommodating students

learning needs along with flexibility in time use to group and re-group students according to mastery learning (O'Neil, 1995). Along with these ideas Hackmann (1995) contends "... students need more time to learn, especially to learn material in depth. When the time allotted for classes is always limited to 40 or 50 minutes, many youth will not master all the material" (p.29).

> Over time the use of block periods changes the structure of curriculum. Blocks provide time to study material in greater depth. Yet, if some other topic is studied in greater depth, some other topic will be omitted, because, for the most part block periods only rearrange existing class time. As teachers and students study topics in greater depth, and as students become more active as learners, less receivers and more doers, the whole notion of *covering the curriculum* will change. As Ted Sizer has explained, less will become more, as the focus of teachers' concern moves from coverage to student learning (Marshak, 1997, p.3).

Marshak (1998) contends " Teachers must also re-evaluate their mental models of learning, curriculum, coverage, and assessment" (p. 2). Fogarty's thoughts on curricular frameworks are as follows:

> Complementing the instructional focus on learner-centered strategies is the focus on curricular frameworks for relevant, purposeful learning. Included in the curricular frameworks that promote meaningful learning are *project-oriented curriculums* that rally instructional activities, *thematic units* that create umbrellas to learning, *performance-based learning* that culminates in a high-profile finale, *service learning* that adapts a community focus to purposeful projects, *problem-based learning* that induces solutions to real-life problems, and *case studies* that ground learning in the analysis of complex situations and the immersion of debriefing sessions (Fogarty,1995 p.14-15). (Emphasis original).

According to Lake Central high school principal , William Trujillo, as cited in the Hammond Times " '...it (block scheduling).. develops continuity in the class, eliminates start and stop times of a traditional class,' which results in a loss of instructional time" (Spivak, 1995, p.B-2). Literature addresses curriculum needs in Marshak (1997),

> In addition to an increased variety of teacher-structured and teacher-led activities, block periods allow-- and eventually demand-- an increase in the extent to which students are active as learners and set directions for their own learning. Block periods provide enough time for students to explore, question, engage, initiate, research, develop, build, and create--in class! Teaching effectively in block periods requires that teachers continually seek a constructive balance between the need for them as adults to guide students and the need for them to encourage and help students to take charge of their own learning (p. 2-3).

In the same article Marshak addresses the issue of computer-based technologies. He states that block scheduling is the only answer to meet the needs of time elements for students to master computer technology effectively.

" Many educators in schools using block schedules say that overall school climate improves as students and teachers spend more concentrated time with one another... Discipline problems have dropped at many of the schools using block schedules" (O'Neil, 1995, p. 14). Further in the article O'Neil quotes Wasson High School principal, Roger Schoenstein, as saying " One result of the block schedule has been a calmer place, fewer fights, less vandalism--just a slowed-down pace across the entire building" (p.14). Many research sources indicate that discipline problems are reduced due to block scheduling. Two top researchers Canady and Rettig (1993) state:

> In most high schools, throngs of students are discharged into the hallways at the end of each period. This phenomenon creates a problem of supervision for school administrators and teachers because many discipline problems occur during these transitions. Because classes change less frequently in the block schedule, there are fewer opportunities for student misbehavior" (p.312).

Buckman, King and Ryan (1995) share another common statement, as expressed by Colonial High School in East Orlando, Florida, "dramatic improvements, fewer suspensions, fewer disciplinary infractions, and higher grades" are all part of the climate benefits of block schedules (p.13). Additional contributions to the literature include reports of decreases in dropout rates and increases in attendance and grade point averages.

" When the climate of a school supports student achievement, students are likely to learn more in their classes, perform better on achievement tests, behave better, and be more satisfied with their schooling" (Ashton & Webb as cited by Ziemke, 1994, p.51).

Student benefits from block scheduling include a focus on higher-order thinking, reflective thinking, predicting, also an increased student ownership, accountability, and developed social skills (Fogarty, 1995). In O'Neil's (1995) article, student achievement is reflected in reports of grades going up, students completing more courses, and students taking and passing more Advanced Placement exams.

> Because block periods require students to become more active, self-directed and responsible learners, they also require a high level of student competence in terms of study and learning skills. To succeed in block periods, students need to listen skillfully, ask good questions, take notes, use various kinds of text resources, read flexibly, learn new words and terms, participate in and learn from discussions, and use visual materials. They also need to ' take charge of their learning' and effectively manage their own time and resources (Marshak, 1997, p.3).

Fogarty (1995) expands on these ideas when she explores the tri-assessment model. Included in this model is traditional assessment which focuses on grades, grade point averages, and student ranking. Features to this assessment include classwork, homework, and criterion-referenced and standardized measures. Portfolio assessment focuses on growth and development of student potential. Features to this assessment include collection, selection, reflection, and inspection. The final aspect to this model is performance assessment which focuses on relevance and transfer in respect to students performance. Features to this assessment include scoring rubrics, standards, criteria, and indicators. Wyatt (1996) indicates:

> Open-ended projects, demonstrations, portfolios, and other types of documentation of student learning are becoming common assessment practices. Teachers develop the guidelines or rubrics by which such demonstrations are judged. Finding out what students can *do* is just as important as finding out what students *know* (p. 16-17).

In Wyatt's article, More Time, More Training, (1996) she concludes that: "When your overall goal is developing a better instructional environment through longer class periods, staff development is essential. Block scheduling without fundamental changes in instruction is merely longer blocks of the same old stuff" (p. 18). Beardstown Senior High School in Illinois encouraged teachers to include three different activities and time for supervised study in each class period. They found that the longer periods encouraged mastery learning and hands on experiences. Finally, (Marshak, 1998), states that " The last element, student competence in learning and study skills, is a key to the success of extended periods. Only with the acquisition of effective learning skills can students make productive use of longer, activity-oriented block periods (p.3).

Project Objectives and Processes

As a result of the exploration of block scheduling, during the period of January 2000 to May 2000, the researchers at the targeted high school will survey and evaluate the benefits of block scheduling, as measured by parent, student and teacher surveys, grade distribution data, attendance records, numbers of referrals and suspensions.

In order to explore the overall effectiveness of block scheduling, the following processes are necessary:

- Investigate the relevant influence of block scheduling on school climate.
- Reveal the innovations consequent to the enhancement of block scheduling.
- Chart and evaluate the achievement levels produced from involvement in block scheduling.

Project Action Plan

WHO: The researchers

WHAT: Gather and assess the records derived from 4 years of block scheduling as well as one year prior to block. Then process the data collected.

WHERE: Targeted High School

WHY: To evaluate and reveal the effectiveness of block scheduling.

HOW: Through the use of data collection the following information will be gathered and processed.

I. Attendance Office

* Attendance records

-month/year

-quarter/semester

II. Dean's Office

* Referrals

-month/year

-quarter/semester

* Suspensions

-suspension days

-number of students

III. Registrar's Office

* Grade Distribution

-school totals

-percentages

IV. Surveys

* Parent

* Teacher

* Student

WHEN: January 10 - February 29

1. Gather Attendance data
2. Collect Dean's records
3. Acquire Registrar's information

March 1-31

1. Distribute surveys
2. Collect surveys

April 3 - May 26

1. Evaluate data
2. Review and analyze data

Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the effects of block scheduling, data relevant to school climate and achievement levels will be determined through school records. Survey results will be recorded, charted and evaluated.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this project was to explore the overall effectiveness of block scheduling. The implementation of research involved the exploration of attendance records, student referrals, number of suspensions, grade distribution data and parent, student and teacher surveys. (Appendices A-S)

Initially surveys were administered to students, sent home to parents and given to teachers. (Appendices N-P) Surveys were not distributed to the high school at large but to a random group of students and their parents. Teachers surveyed were randomly selected by department. The next step involved the collection of attendance record data from the attendance office, referral and suspension record data from the dean's office and grade distribution data from the registrar's office. (Appendices A-M) The data collected from these offices reflected information two years prior to block and the four years of implementation. Phase two involved collecting, collating and charting all information from surveys and data. (Appendices A-S)

Presentation and Analysis of Results

In order to assess the overall effects of block scheduling at the targeted high school data was collected over a five month period to reflect the six years of study. The results of the baseline data are presented in the following charts and graphs.

Month	Pilot Block 1996-1997	Pilot Block 1997-1998	Block 1998-1999	Block 1999-2000
Aug./Sept.	96.6	94.9	95.9	94.4
October	95.5	94.7	94.4	92.6
November	91.5	93.8	92.9	91.8
December	96.1	95.2	94.5	93.1
January	92.8	94.3	93.2	92.9
February	94.2	94.1	92.7	92.4
March	94.0	94.3	94.1	89.9
April	94.0	93.4	93.4	88.9
May/June	93.9	93.7	91.1	92.5
Total	94.6	94.3	93.6	92.1

Figure 14. Percentage of students in attendance by month and year during block scheduling.

	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000
First Quarter	96.2	95.0	95.9	94.3
Second Quarter	94.1	94.4	93.8	91.8
First Semester	95.1	94.7	94.4	93.0
Third Quarter	93.9	94.3	93.2	91.9
Fourth Quarter	94.1	93.8	92.4	91.9
Second Semester	94.1	94.1	92.8	91.9
Total	94.6	94.3	93.6	92.5

Figure 15. Percentage of students in attendance by quarter and semester.

Analysis of Figures 14 and 15 indicates percentage increases in attendance for the two years of the pilot program over the two years prior to block. (Apendices A, B, H & I) The pilot program average was 94.5%, while the two years prior to block averaged 93.8%. However, a marked decrease occurs in the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 school years which reflects an average of 92.9%. An increase in graduation requirements did not occur until the end of the 1999-2000 school year. Many upper classmen achieved excessive credits beyond what was needed for graduation; therefore, data reflects a drop in attendance during second semester of the 1999-2000 school year.

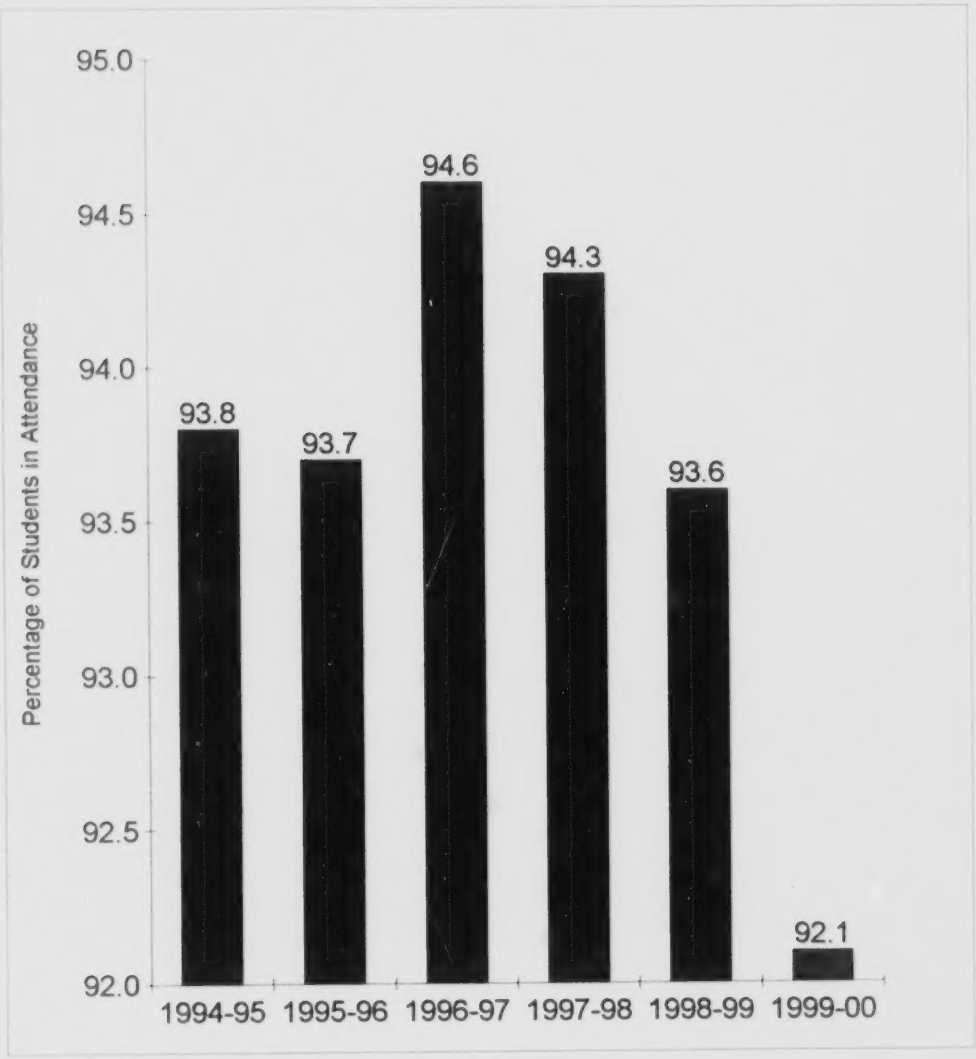

Figure 16. Percentage of students in attendance over a six year period prior to and during block scheduling.

The next area of investigation involved baseline data comparisons of monthly referrals and suspensions for the six year period. (Apendices C, D, E, J & K) Over the five month period data was collected, collated and charted. Found in the following figures are the results of the study.

	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000
Aug./Sept.	452	616	628	375
October	491	497	478	285
November	361	401	368	229
December	238	212	255	102
January	256	212	253	302
February	382	326	467	449
March	374	348	681	437
April	427	239	345	300
May/June	404	379	379	242
Total	3434	3230	3854	2721

Figure 17. Number of referrals by month during block scheduling.

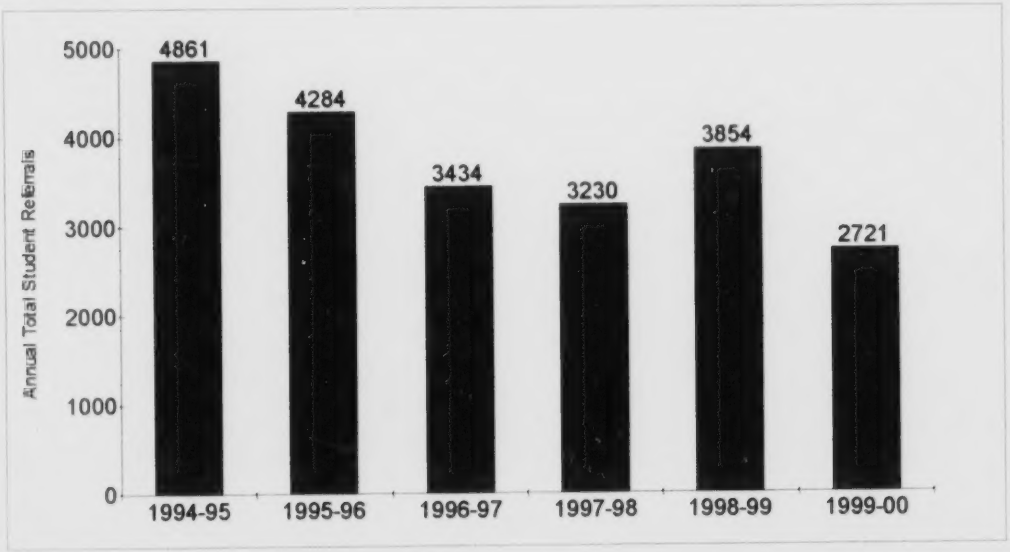

Figure 18. Annual total of student referrals over a six year period prior to and during block scheduling.

Analyzing Figures 17 and 18 indicates a general declining tendency in referrals over the six year period, with the exception of the 1998-1999 school year where there is an increase of approximately 19%. (Appendices C & J) The largest monthly decreases take place during the 1997-1998 and 1999-2000 school years and the annual totals reflect the same tendency.

	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000
Aug./Sept.	15/80	17/89	32/107	10/27
October	20/40	22/133	18/76	8/29
November	18/67	17/50	13/43	12/47
December	16/73	22/49	10/35	5/17
January	17/44	11/38	6/28	19/68
February	34/131	11/33	21/55	23/63.5
March	14/100	12/28	16/84	33/97
April	16/81	7/24	23/105	8/38
May/June	17/34	16/48	18/83	13/35
Total	167/650	135/411	157/616	131/421.5

Figure 19. Number of student suspensions and days of suspension during block scheduling.

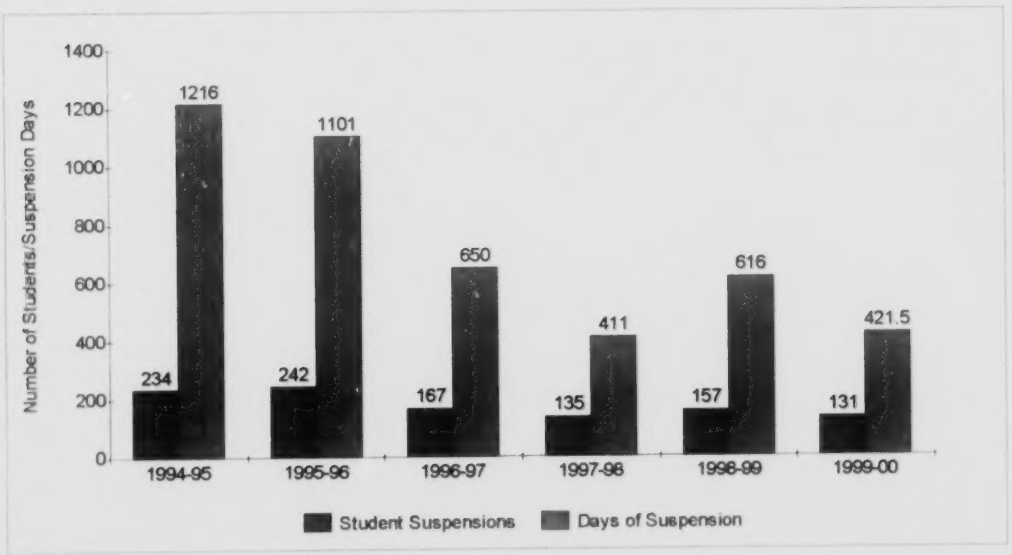

Figure 20. Number of student suspensions and days of suspension over a six year period prior to and during block scheduling.

There are a number of variables that have an influence on suspensions which are distinctly different than what takes place in referrals; however, there is an indication in Figures 19 and 20 of the same tendencies that were seen in Figures 17 and 18. (Appendices C, D, E, J & K)

Finally, the grade distribution data was gathered by grade, school totals and percentages for the six year period. (Apendices F, G, L & M) The findings are available in Figures 21, 22 and 23.

	Quarter 1				
	96-97 / 97-98	96-97 / 97-98	96-97 / 97-98	96-97 / 97-98	96-97 / 97-98
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals	2340 / 2255	2392 / 2161	1718 / 1651	748 / 697	466 / 634
Percent	30.5 / 30.5	31.2 / 29.2	22.4 / 22.3	9.8 / 9.4	6.1 / 8.6
	Quarter 2				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals	2125 / 2040	2223 / 2026	1794 / 1742	906 / 822	680 / 758
Percent	27.5 / 27.6	28.8 / 27.4	23.2 / 23.6	11.7 / 11.1	8.8 / 10.3
	Semester 1				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Total	2118 / 1966	2366 / 2160	1976 / 1870	911 / 867	420 / 522
Percent	27.2 / 26.6	30.4 / 29.2	25.4 / 25.3	11.7 / 11.7	5.4 / 7.1
	Quarter 3				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Total	2426 / 2232	2269 / 1891	1744 / 1503	734 / 662	591 / 658
Percent	31.2 / 32.1	29.2 / 27.2	22.5 / 21.6	9.5 / 9.5	7.6 / 9.5
	Quarter 4				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Total	2426 / 2017	2108 / 1871	1811 / 1535	849 / 817	600 / 690
Percent	31.1 / 29.1	27.0 / 27.0	23.2 / 22.2	10.9 / 11.8	7.7 / 10.0
	Semester 2				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals	2363 / 1997	2242 / 1915	1909 / 1655	920 / 876	407 / 501
Percent	30.1 / 28.8	28.6 / 27.6	24.3 / 23.8	11.7 / 12.6	5.2 / 7.2

Figure 21. Comparative grade distribution data for school years 1996-97 and 1997-98.

	Quarter 1				
	98-99 / 99-00	98-99 / 99-00	98-99 / 99-00	98-99 / 99-00	98-99 / 99-00
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals	1859 / 2164	2065 / 2262	1640 / 1685	739 / 731	612 / 536
Percent	26.9 / 29.3	29.9 / 30.7	23.7 / 22.8	10.7 / 9.9	8.9 / 7.3
	Quarter 2				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals	1763 / 2023	1927 / 2058	1661 / 1692	860 / 875	730 / 696
Percent	25.4 / 27.5	27.8 / 28.0	23.9 / 23.0	12.4 / 11.9	10.5 / 9.5
	Semester 1				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Total	1707 / 1921	1994 / 2207	1811 / 1835	962 / 901	494 / 436
Percent	24.5 / 26.3	28.6 / 30.2	26.0 / 25.1	13.8 / 12.3	7.1 / 6.0
	Quarter 3				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Total	1976 / 2045	2016 / 2199	1591 / 1739	701 / 786	579 / 551
Percent	28.8 / 27.9	29.4 / 30.0	23.2 / 23.8	10.2 / 10.7	8.4 / 7.5
	Quarter 4				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Total	1786 / 1839	1868 / 1984	1623 / 1827	870 / 904	700 / 764
Percent	26.1 / 25.1	27.3 / 27.1	23.7 / 25.0	12.7 / 12.4	10.2 / 10.4
	Semester 2				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals	1740 / 1777	1956 / 2145	1789 / 1916	937 / 980	469 / 523
Percent	25.3 / 24.2	28.4 / 29.2	26.0 / 26.1	13.6 / 13.3	6.8 / 7.1

Figure 22. Comparative grade distribution data for school years 1998-99 and 1999-00.

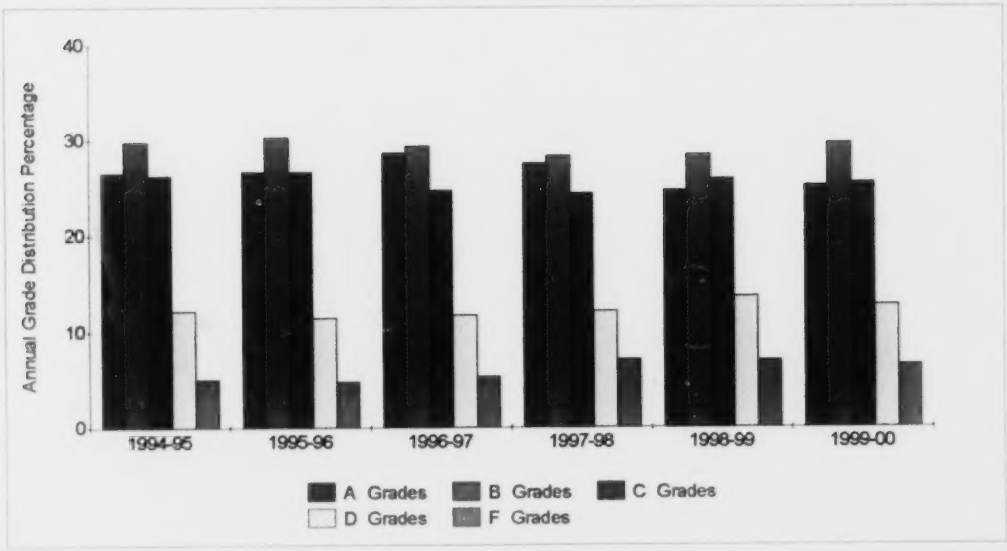

Figure 23. Comparative percentages of grade distribution data over a six year period prior to and during block scheduling.

In analysing the data presented in Figures 21, 22 and 23, a review of the annual grade distribution would indicate, on the whole, there is no significant change in the percentage of grades from school years 1994-95 through 1999-00. (Appendices F, G, L & M) With the onset of the pilot program in school year 1996-97, a slight increase is shown which reflects the enthusiasm generated by the commencement of a new innovation. Whereas, a slight decrease is indicated in 1998-99 in grade distribution. It is important to know here, that at the close of the 1997-98 school year the administrator, who initiated block, accepted a new position in another school district. Consequently, a new administrator took over the helm the following school year.

Evaluating the grade distribution patterns in Figures 21 and 22 by quarter, it is seen that the first and third quarters begin strongly with A's and B's; while, there is a tendency in second and fourth quarters to have an increase in percentages in C's, D's and F's. (Appendices L & M) A quick review of the semesters show an overall pattern of a decrease in A's, an average of the percentages in B's, while C's and D's show an increase and F's decreased. Finally, it is important to indicate no significant changes occurred in grades during the six year period.

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data on block scheduling, an overall benefit has been noted at the targeted high school. The data presented indicates slight gains in most areas, with the exception of grades, which follows a national trend showing no significant gains or losses in grades. (Appendices F, G, L & M)

As part of the intervention, surveys were randomly administered to parents, students and teachers. (Appendices N, O & P) The rate of return on the surveys was 41.3% of parents, 37.3% of students and 100% of teachers. Considering the national return rate is 20% for surveys, the researchers were pleased with their returns. The surveys will provide and interesting synopsis to the effectiveness of block scheduling. In the surveys the percentages of responses to the answers are indicated. (Appendices Q, R & S)

Before continuing, it is important to note that the parents and students have recent experiences with the traditional six-period schedule, from our feeder school programs and/or previous high schools. An in-depth interpretation of the student surveys shows in the area of homework completion that students feel they are spending about the same amount of time, one half to one hour on an average evening. (Appendix R) They also indicate that the quality of their homework is better (50%) or about the same as (50%) compared to the traditional six-period day, while over fifty percent of the parents express a feeling that the quality of their child's homework is better this year then with the traditional six-period schedule.(Appendix Q) Interestingly, the parents seem to feel the students spend one to two hours on their homework on an average evening. The teachers see the quality and completion rate as being about the same as a traditional six-period schedule. (Appendix S)

Looking at the student's response to the quality of their classwork, it is viewed about the same as in a traditional schedule. (Appendix R) Seventy-one percent of the students feel that they are able to finish activities in one period and they understand what the teacher is teaching about the same as in a traditional six-period schedule. The instructors, on the other hand, see the quality of their student's classwork as better or about the same and eighty percent feel their student's mastery level of concepts remains about the same. (Appendix S)

Student motivation in the classroom and in learning is always a concern of teachers and the administration. The surveys indicate that the student's understanding of what the teacher is teaching is about the same as compared to the traditional schedule and students are experiencing more success being motivated to learn in the block. (Appendix R) Sixty-eight percent of the student's learning needs are being met more effectively. Forty-five percent of the parents agree that their child's motivation to learn is greater in the block while, another 45% feel it is about the same. (Appendix Q) Still, 55% feel that their child's learning needs are being met more effectively. Fifty percent of the teachers surveyed agree that they are more successful at motivating their students. (Appendix S) While the students and parents agree that learning needs are being met more effectively, the teachers do not see it that way. (Appendices Q, R & S) They are split in their response indicating 40% about the same as in the past and 40% less effectively.

An important feature to student learning and motivation is contained in the student-teacher relationship. The surveys reveal an interesting slant to this facet, in that, the parents and teachers conclude a positive relationship between students and teachers. (Appendices Q & S) A full 80% of the parents agree with this statement. From the student's point of view, 46% feel they have established about the same relationship with teachers as in a six-period schedule. (Appendix R) Taking a look at student-to-student relationships, all are in accord that students develop positive relationships with other students through the 85-minute instructional period.

According to national researchers a major advantage to block scheduling is the enrichment of teacher strategies. At the targeted high school a full 60% of the teachers are experimenting with new instructional approaches and it is not beyond the grasp of the students and parents. (Appendix S) They also agree that there is an increase in the variety of classroom activities. (Appendices Q & R) An added benefit is that the students feel the interesting activities hold their attention and interest. And yet, 40% of the students were concerned that four or more of their teachers are continuing to lecture too much. It is obvious to the researchers that some teachers are not taking advantage of the opportunity to expand teaching strategies. Fifty percent of the teachers responding to the survey indicated some problems in terms of maintaining student

attentiveness and interest. A confusing aspect to this is that 50% of the students feel that block offers the atmosphere for them to be more successful in working cooperatively with one another on classroom tasks.

The thrust of the research culminates now in discussing the benefits of block scheduling as seen through the responses to the surveys. (Appendices Q, R & S) Seventy-seven percent of the parent surveys indicated a preference to retain block scheduling. Many of the parents feel that their child's learning needs are being met more effectively and that it is a major advantage to have eight classes as opposed to a six- period school day. This allows the students to take a variety of electives over their high school career, which makes for a well rounded education. The student responses reflected the same enthusiasm for the advantages in scheduling, class offerings and the effectiveness of block schedule to meet their learning needs. They felt that the school offers a calm atmosphere in which they are able to focus in the classroom and on the expanded opportunity for activities provided by the teachers. Seventy-one percent of the students surveyed are in favor of maintaining block scheduling. The teachers perspective overall seems to indicate a juncture in block scheduling that generally takes place at about the four-to-six year mile marker. At this point definitive aspects of the program are seen as needing changes and modification. The teacher surveys mirror this point in time when it becomes necessary for re-evaluation. Instructors tended to feel that their content and curriculum is worse than in the traditional schedule, indicating the same national tendencies. In the block schedule the impetus is to quality not quantity; a more in-depth perspective. Many of the categories questioned in the survey show that things have remained about the same as they were in the six-period schedule. A variety of areas such as time spent on grading and correcting assignments, student mastery of concepts, completion rate of homework, and quality of student classwork are indicated in the survey as remaining the same. As to the benefits of the program, the teachers see overall student success, more opportunities for learning, their ability to motivate students, establishing positive relationships and new instructional approaches are a few areas that are a definite plus. And finally, 70% of the teachers surveyed prefer to teach in the eight block schedule.

Write-in teacher comments regarding suggestions to increase achievement include the following: (Appendix S)

* Develop more projects and activities which simulate real-life experiences, especially career type experiences.
* For middle and lower track students, more vocational course offerings to meet their needs.
* Raise expectations and implement them .
* Homework requirement for all classes.
* No late work for all classes.
* Eliminate shortened classes.
* Crack down on tardies, lack of homework.
* Expected homework from all students in every class possible.
* Teambuilding within the classroom.
* Building a classroom community.
* A refresher course on teaching in the block.
* Modify block by adding Friday as a full schedule day.
* Consistently enforce a set of uniform classroom rules.
* Establish a homework table for all students.

The following teacher comments regard identifying one aspect or activity that contributes to the effectiveness of their teaching through block scheduling: (Appendix S)

* Vary the activities during class as much as possible.
* Increased time to grade/return papers more quickly to the students.
* More time to get to know each student more personally which I feel helps improve their attitude and consequently their grade.
* With additional time daily, there is more time to reinforce a concept.

Overall, the surveys indicate a positive feeling with regard to keeping block scheduling within the school system of the targeted high school.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In looking at the overall effectiveness of block scheduling the researchers findings indicate that the advantages greatly out weigh the disadvantages. The benefits extend into the far reaching areas of school climate, academics, human interaction, function and structure, resources, time and space. While data was not collected on these benefits, as stated earlier in this research paper, literature indicates that these benefits are a consequence of block scheduling and the researchers concur. Through the researchers personal experiences block scheduling has provided these additional benefits at the targeted high school. Evaluation of block scheduling has lead to the fundamental benefits of enrichment in teaching strategies, stronger relationships, increased student involvement and attention in the classroom, more time allowing for follow-up, reinforcement, extended lessons, research and labs. Again, no data was collected to show these benefits; however, they are perceived at the targeted high school. It is the researchers opinion that a follow-up study to collect data on these additional benefits would be advisable.

Due to the structure of the eight block schedule there exits four classes per day with only three passing periods, while the traditional schedule has six or more classes and five or more passing periods. Another element of time involves the elimination of excessive passing periods, start-up and endings to classes. More course offerings and choices for electives, decreased class sizes, a calm school pace, and improvement in discipline are additional observable benefits to block scheduling at the targeted high school. All of the perceived benefits are considered of primary importance by the researchers.

The researchers have come to several conclusions after serious consideration during the long research process. The first recommendation involves a need for teacher training in preparation for block scheduling as a continual transition of new teachers replace retiring teachers. There is also an on- going need for professional development offerings for the staff at large keynoting emphasis on various aspects of block strategies. A final suggestion to schools

considering block scheduling. It is the researchers opinion, and literature substantiates this opinion, that graduation requirement changes should be evaluated much earlier in the block evolutionary process. The targeted high school waited until the end of the fourth year to make needed changes, which in the researcher's opinion had an effect on attendance during the fourth year (Figure 15).

It is important, at this particular time, to remember that block scheduling is an evolution which is a never ending process of evaluating, analyzing and modifying. Changing the schedule alone will not bring relief to school problems. The process involves building and improving from year to year. This creative restructuring of time evolves into a new school community. Therefore, it is the researchers recommendation that the targeted high school remain on block. It is also recommended that it is essential to re-evaluate and continue in the growth process.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Attendance by Month and Year

Prior to Block

Month	1994-1995	1995-1996
August/September		
October		
November		
December		
January		
February		
March		
April		
May/June		
Total		

Appendix B

Attendance by Quarter and Semester

Prior to Block

	1994-1995	1995-1996
First Quarter		
Second Quarter		
First Semester		
Third Quarter		
Fourth Quarter		
Second Semester		
Total		

Appendix C

Referrals by Month

Prior to Block

	1994-1995	1995-1996
August/September		
October		
November		
December		
January		
February		
March		
April		
May/June		
Totals		

Appendix D

Suspensions Prior to Block

	1994-95	1995-96
Aug/Sep		
October		
November		
December		
January		
February		
March		
April		
May/June		
Total		

Appendix E

Suspension Days Prior to Block

	1994-95	1995-96
Aug/Sep		
October		
November		
December		
January		
February		
March		
April		
May/June		
Total		

Appendix F

Grade Distribution 1994-1995

Prior to Block

	Quarter 1				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals					
Percent					
	Quarter 2				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals					
Percent					
	Semester 1				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals					
Percent					
	Quarter 3				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals					
Percent					
	Quarter 4				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals					
Percent					
	Semester 2				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals					
Percent					

Appendix G

Grade Distribution 1995-1996

Prior to Block

	Quarter 1				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals					
Percent					
	Quarter 2				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals					
Percent					
	Semester 1				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals					
Percent					
	Quarter 3				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals					
Percent					
	Quarter 4				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals					
Percent					
	Semester 2				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals					
Percent					

Appendix H

Attendance by Month and Year

During Block

Month	Pilot Block 1996-1997	Pilot Block 1997-1998	Block 1998-1999	Block 1999-2000
Aug./Sept.				
October				
November				
December				
January				
February				
March				
April				
May/June				
Total				

Appendix I

Attendance by Quarter and Semester

During Block

	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000
First Quarter				
Second Quarter				
First Semester				
Third Quarter				
Fourth Quarter				
Second Semester				
Total				

Appendix J

Referrals by Month

During Block

	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000
Aug./Sept.				
October				
November				
December				
January				
February				
March				
April				
May/June				
Total				

Appendix K

Suspension and Days of Suspension

During Block

	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000
Aug./Sept.				
October				
November				
December				
January				
February				
March				
April				
May/June				
Total				

Appendix L

Grade Distribution 1996-1998

	Quarter 1				
	96-97 / 97-98	96-97 / 97-98	96-97 / 97-98	96-97 / 97-98	96-97 / 97-98
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals					
Percent					
	Quarter 2				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals					
Percent					
	Semester 1				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Total					
Percent					
	Quarter 3				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Total					
Percent					
	Quarter 4				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Total					
Percent					
	Semester 2				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals					
Percent					

Appendix M

Grade Distribution 1998-2000

	Quarter 1				
	98-99 / 99-00	98-99 / 99-00	98-99 / 99-00	98-99 / 99-00	98-99 / 99-00
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals					
Percent					
	Quarter 2				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals					
Percent					
	Semester 1				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Total					
Percent					
	Quarter 3				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Total					
Percent					
	Quarter 4				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Total					
Percent					
	Semester 2				
Grade	A	B	C	D	F
School Totals					
Percent					

Appendix N

Parent Questionnaire

1. My son/daughter is in the _____ grade, (if you have more than one child enrolled provide information for the oldest.)

   a. 9th
   b. 10th
   c. 11th
   d. 12th

2. Please indicate the gender of the oldest child that you have at the high school.

   a. Male
   b. Female

3. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional junior high schedule in which my child was enrolled, I feel that the quality of my child's learning in the eight block schedule is:

   a. better
   b. less
   c. about the same

4. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional junior high schedule in which my child was enrolled, I feel that the quality of my child's homework in the eight block schedule is:

   a. better this year
   b. about the same as last year.
   c. worse this year

5. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional junior high schedule in which my child was enrolled, I feel that my child's motivation to learn in the eight-block schedule is:

   a. greater
   b. less
   c. about the same

6. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional junior high schedule in which my child was enrolled, I feel that my child's learning needs in the eight-block schedule are being met.

   a. more effectively
   b. about as effectively
   c. less effectively

7. The 85-minute instructional period has allowed my child to develop a positive relationship with his/her teachers.

   a. agree
   b. strongly agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

8. The 85-minute instructional period has allowed my child to develop a positive relationship with other students.

   a. agree
   b. strongly agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

9. Teachers are providing a variety of instructional activities.

   a. agree
   b. strongly agree
   c. disagree
   d. strongly disagree

10. On the average evening, how much time does your child spend on homework?

   a. has no homework
   b. less than 1/2 hour
   c. 1/2 to 1 hour
   d. 1 hour to 1 1/2
   e. 1 1/2 to 2 hours

11. Considering all your impressions about the eight-block schedule, please select a response.

    a. I would like to remain on the eight-block schedule.
    b. I would like to return to the traditional schedule.
    c. I have no opinion about either schedule.

12. I feel that my son/daughter has had more opportunities to take elective courses.

    a. agree
    b. disagree

13. The opportunity to take eight courses instead of six is_____

    a. an advantage
    b. a disadvantage
    c. not important

14. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional junior high schedule in which my child was enrolled, I feel that the quantity of my child's homework in the eight-block schedule is:

    a. better this year
    b. about the same as last year
    c. worse this year

Appendix O

Student Questionnaire

1. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional schedule in junior high, this year I am spending _____time on my assignments.

   a. more
   b. less
   c. the same

2. My teachers have designed_____interesting activities that keep my attention and interest.

   a. more
   b. fewer
   c. about the same number of

3. In general, compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional schedule Junior high, I understand what the teacher is teaching.

   a. more
   b. about the same
   c. less

4. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional schedule in junior high, I complete my homework

   a. better this year
   b. about the same as last year
   c. worse this year
   d. I have no homework

5. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional schedule in junior high, the quality of my homework is

   a. better this year
   b. about the same as last year
   c. worse this year

6. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional schedule in junior high, the quality of my classwork is

   a. better this year
   b. about the same as last year
   c. worse this year

7. In terms of my being motivated to learn, I believe that I am experiencing____ in the block schedule than I did in a traditional schedule.

   a. more success
   b. about the same amount of success
   c. less success

8. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional schedule in junior high, this year my learning needs are being met

   a. more effectively
   b. about the same as in the past
   c. less effectively

9. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional schedule in junior high, I believe that I have had____in establishing positive relationships with teachers.

   a. more success
   b. about the same success
   c. less success

10. Some students were concerned that the longer periods would be boring because some teachers would lecture too much. How many of your teachers lecture too much this semester?

    a. none
    b. one
    c. two
    d. three
    e. four or more

11. Teachers are providing a variety of activities to keep me interested.

    a. strongly agree
    b. agree
    c. disagree
    d. strongly disagree

12. In terms of working cooperatively with one another on classroom tasks, this year I am experiencing

    a. more success
    b. about the same success
    c. less success

13. In terms of exhibiting positive relationships with other students, this year I am experiencing

    a. more success
    b. about the same success
    c. less success

14. On an average evening, how much time do you spend on homework?

    a. more than 2 hours
    b. 1 1/2 to 2 hours
    c. 1 to 1 1/2 hours
    d. 1/2 to 1 hour
    e. less than 1/2 hour

15. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional schedule in junior high, I feel that the pace of the day is_____

    a. slower
    b. faster
    c. about the same

16. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional schedule in junior high, I feel the atmosphere of the school is_____calm.

    a. more
    b. less
    c. about the same

17. In the current eight-block schedule, I have been able to take more elective courses.

    a. yes
    b. no
    c. about the same

18. Because of the longer class period in the eight-block schedule, I am able to finish activities in one period (labs, presentations, etc.)

    a. yes
    b. no

19. The eight-block schedule allows students to take eight courses instead of six. (Choose all that apply).

    a. I have been able to get the courses that I chose.
    b. Some classes I chose were offered at the same time; therefore, I had to pick one and lose the other/s.
    c. I had trouble finding classes that I was eligible to take.

20. The opportunity to take eight courses instead of six is____

    a. an advantage
    b. a disadvantage
    c. not important to me

21. Considering all your impressions about the eight-block schedule, select a response.

    a. I would like to remain on the eight-block schedule.
    b. I would like to return to the traditional six-period day.
    c. Both programs are about the same, so it doesn't matter.

Appendix P

Teacher Questionnaire

1. Have you had prior experience teaching in a traditional schedule?

   a. yes
   b. no

2. If you answered Yes in Number 1, how many years of experience have you had?

   a. 1
   b. 2
   c. 3
   d. 4 or more

3. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule, I am spending____time on lesson planning.

   a. more
   b. less
   c. the same

4. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule, this year I am spending ____time on correcting and grading assignments.

   a. more
   b. less
   c. the same

5. In terms of maintaining student attentiveness and interest, I am experiencing

   a. serious problems
   b. some problems
   c. almost no problems
   d. no problems

6. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule, student mastery of concepts in my classes is

   a. better
   b. about the same
   c. worse

7. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule, the completion rate of homework is

   a. better
   b. about the same
   c. worse

8. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule, the quality of the students' homework is

   a. better
   b. about the same
   c. worse
   d. I don't give homework

9. As an instructor, I feel that the quality of my students classwork is____in the block schedule than it was in the traditional schedule.

   a. better
   b. about the same
   c. worse

10. As an instructor, I feel that my content coverage is ____in the block schedule than it was in the traditional schedule.

    a. better
    b. about the same
    c. worse

11. As an instructor I feel that the quality of my curriculum coverage is____in the block schedule than it was in the traditional schedule.

    a. better
    b. about the same
    c. worse

12. As an instructor, I feel that my overall success with my students is____in the block schedule than it was in the traditional schedule.

    a. better
    b. about the same
    c. worse

13. I feel that the financial support that I receive for instructional materials in the block schedule is____than it was when we were in a traditional schedule.

    a. better
    b. about the same
    c. worse

14. I feel that our students are experiencing more opportunities for learning in a block schedule than they had in the traditional schedule.

    a. agree
    b. strongly agree
    c. disagree
    d. strongly disagree

15. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule, I have had____opportunities to have discussions with colleagues about curriculum and instruction.

    a. more
    b. less
    c. about the same

16. In terms of experimenting with new instructional approaches (peer coaching, cross-curricular teaching, cooperative and quantum learning etc.), I believe that compared to a traditional six-period schedule, I am

    a. doing more experimenting
    b. doing less experimenting
    c. doing about the same amount

17. In terms of my motivating students, I believe that compared to a traditional six-period schedule, I am experiencing

    a. more success
    b. about the same amount of success
    c. less success

18. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule, this year I am able to meet all my students' needs

    a. more effectively
    b. about the same as in the past
    c. less effectively

19. In terms of establishing positive relationships with students, I have had____than in a traditional six-period schedule.

    a. more success
    b. less success
    c. about the same success

20. In terms of working cooperatively with one another on classroom tasks, students are experiencing____than in a traditional six-period schedule.

    a. more success
    b. about the same success
    c. less success

21. In terms of exhibiting positive relationships with their peers, students are experiencing____than in a traditional six-period schedule.

    a. more success
    b. about the same success
    c. less success

22. My students are actively engaged in classroom activities

    a. more of the time
    b. sometimes
    c. rarely
    d. never

23. Considering everything

    a. I prefer to teach in an eight-block schedule
    b. I prefer to return to the six-period schedule
    c. I have no preference

24. What strategies would you suggest to increase achievement at the targeted high school?

25. Through block schedule, if you could identify one aspect or activity that contributes to the effectiveness of your teaching what would it be ?

Appendix Q

Parent Questionnaire

1. My son/daughter is in the _____ grade, (if you have more than one child enrolled provide information for the oldest.)

   a. 9th 54.8%
   b. 10th 29%
   c. 11th 9.7%
   d. 12th 6.5%

2. Please indicate the gender of the oldest child that you have at the high school.

   a. Male 61.3%
   b. Female 38.7%

3. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional junior high schedule in which my child was enrolled, I feel that the quality of my child's learning in the eight block schedule is:

   a. better 67.7%
   b. less 3.2%
   c. about the same 29%

4. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional junior high schedule in which my child was enrolled, I feel that the quality of my child's homework in the eight block schedule is:

   a. better this year 54.8%
   b. about the same as last year. 32.3%
   c. worse this year 12.9%

5. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional junior high schedule in which my child was enrolled, I feel that my child's motivation to learn in the eight-block schedule is:

   a. greater 45.2%
   b. less 9.7%
   c. about the same 45.2%

6. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional junior high schedule in which my child was enrolled, I feel that my child's learning needs in the eight-block schedule are being met.

a. more effectively	54.8%
b. about as effectively	32.3%
c. less effectively	12.9%

7. The 85-minute instructional period has allowed my child to develop a positive relationship with his/her teachers.

a. agree	80.6%
b. strongly agree	16.1%
c. disagree	0%
d. strongly disagree	3.2%

8. The 85-minute instructional period has allowed my child to develop a positive relationship with other students.

a. agree	83.9%
b. strongly agree	16.1%
c. disagree	0%
d. strongly disagree	0%

9. Teachers are providing a variety of instructional activities.

a. agree	74.2%
b. strongly agree	6.6%
c. disagree	16.1%
d. strongly disagree	3.2%

10. On the average evening, how much time does your child spend on homework?

a. has no homework	6.6%
b. less than 1/2 hour	22.6%
c. 1/2 to 1 hour	29%
d. 1 hour to 1 ½	29%
e. 1 1/2 to 2 hours	12.9%

11. Considering all your impressions about the eight-block schedule, please select a response.

a. I would like to remain on the eight-block schedule.	77.4%
b. I would like to return to the traditional schedule.	3.2%
c. I have no opinion about either schedule.	19.4%

12. I feel that my son/daughter has had more opportunities to take elective courses.

a. agree	87.1%
b. disagree	12.9%

13. The opportunity to take eight courses instead of six is_____

a. an advantage	87.1%
b. a disadvantage	3.2%
c. not important	9.7%

14. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional junior high schedule in which my child was enrolled, I feel that the quantity of my child's homework in the eight-block schedule is:

a. better this year	51.6%
b. about the same as last year	41.9%
c. worse this year	6.5%

Appendix R

Student Questionnaire

1. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional schedule in junior high, this year I am spending _____time on my assignments.

a.	more	32.1%
b.	less	32.1%
c.	the same	35.7%

2. My teachers have designed_____interesting activities that keep my attention and interest.

a.	more	39.3%
b.	fewer	35.7%
c.	about the same number of	25%

3. In general, compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional schedule Junior high, I understand what the teacher is teaching.

a.	more	32.1%
b.	about the same	64.3%
c.	less	3.6%

4. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional schedule in junior high, I complete my homework

a.	better this year	35.7%
b.	about the same as last year	53.6%
c.	worse this year	0%
d.	I have no homework	10.7%

5. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional schedule in junior high, the quality of my homework is

a.	better this year	50%
b.	about the same as last year	50%
c.	worse this year	0%

6. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional schedule in junior high, the quality of my classwork is

a.	better this year	46.4%
b.	about the same as last year	53.6%
c.	worse this year	0%

7. In terms of my being motivated to learn, I believe that I am experiencing____ in the block schedule than I did in a traditional schedule.

a.	more success	50%
b.	about the same amount of success	46.4%
c.	less success	3.6%

8. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional schedule in junior high, this year my learning needs are being met

a.	more effectively	67..9%
b.	about the same as in the past	25%
c.	less effectively	7.1%

9. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional schedule in junior high, I believe that I have had____in establishing positive relationships with teachers.

a.	more success	35..7%
b.	about the same success	46.4%
c.	less success	17.9%

10. Some students were concerned that the longer periods would be boring because some teachers would lecture too much. How many of your teachers lecture too much this semester?

a.	none	10.7%
b.	one	0%
c.	two	28.6%
d.	three	21.4%
e.	four or more	40%

11. Teachers are providing a variety of activities to keep me interested.

a.	strongly agree	14.3%
b.	agree	42.9%
c.	disagree	25%
d.	strongly disagree	17.9%

12. In terms of working cooperatively with one another on classroom tasks, this year I am experiencing

a. more success	50%
b. about the same success	39.3%
c. less success	10.7%

13. In terms of exhibiting positive relationships with other students, this year I am experiencing

a. more success	50%
b. about the same success	46.4%
c. less success	3.6%

14. On an average evening, how much time do you spend on homework?

a. more than 2 hours	10.7%
b. 1 1/2 to 2 hours	14.3%
c. 1 to 1 1/2 hours	17.9%
d. 1/2 to 1 hour	39.3%
e. less than 1/2 hour	17.9%

15. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional schedule in junior high, I feel that the pace of the day is_____

a. slower	39.3%
b. faster	53.6%
c. about the same	7.1%

16. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule or to the traditional schedule in junior high, I feel the atmosphere of the school is_____calm.

a. more	32.1%
b. less	32.1%
c. about the same	35.7%

17. In the current eight-block schedule, I have been able to take more elective courses.

a. yes	71.4%
b. no	17.9%
c. about the same	7.1%

18. Because of the longer class period in the eight-block schedule, I am able to finish activities in one period (labs, presentations, etc.)

a. yes 71.4%
b. no 28.6%

19. The eight-block schedule allows students to take eight courses instead of six. (Choose all that apply).

a. I have been able to get the courses that I chose. 42.9%
b. Some classes I chose were offered at the same time; therefore, I had to pick one and lose the other/s. 39.3%
c. I had trouble finding classes that I was eligible to take. 14.3%

20. The opportunity to take eight courses instead of six is____

a. an advantage 71.4%
b. a disadvantage 10.7%
c. not important to me 17.9%

21. Considering all your impressions about the eight-block schedule, select a response.

a. I would like to remain on the eight-block schedule. 71.4%
b. I would like to return to the traditional six-period day. 7.1%
c. Both programs are about the same, so it doesn't matter. 21.4%

Appendix S

Teacher Questionnaire

1. Have you had prior experience teaching in a traditional schedule?

   a. yes 90%
   b. no 10%

2. If you answered Yes in Number 1, how many years of experience have you had?

   a. 1 10%
   b. 2 0%
   c. 3 10%
   d. 4 or more 80%

3. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule, I am spending____time on lesson planning.

   a. more 40%
   b. less 30%
   c. the same 30%

4. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule, this year I am spending ____time on correcting and grading assignments.

   a. more 20%
   b. less 10%
   c. the same 70%

5. In terms of maintaining student attentiveness and interest, I am experiencing

   a. serious problems 10%
   b. some problems 50%
   c. almost no problems 40%
   d. no problems 0%

6. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule, student mastery of concepts in my classes is

   a. better 0%
   b. about the same 80%
   c. worse 20%

7. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule, the completion rate of homework is

a. better	0%
b. about the same	60%
c. worse	40%

8. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule, the quality of the students' homework is

a. better	0%
b. about the same	70%
c. worse	30%
d. I don't give homework	0%

9. As an instructor, I feel that the quality of my students classwork is____in the block schedule than it was in the traditional schedule.

a. better	40%
b. about the same	40%
c. worse	20%

10. As an instructor, I feel that my content coverage is ____in the block schedule than it was in the traditional schedule.

a. better	30%
b. about the same	10%
c. worse	60%

11. As an instructor I feel that the quality of my curriculum coverage is____in the block schedule than it was in the traditional schedule.

a. better	10%
b. about the same	10%
c. worse	80%

12. As an instructor, I feel that my overall success with my students is____in the block schedule than it was in the traditional schedule.

a. better	50%
b. about the same	10%
c. worse	20%
* b and c	20%

13. I feel that the financial support that I receive for instructional materials in the block schedule is____than it was when we were in a traditional schedule.

a.	better	40%
b.	about the same	50%
c.	worse	10%

14. I feel that our students are experiencing more opportunities for learning in a block schedule than they had in the traditional schedule.

a.	agree	70%
b.	strongly agree	20%
c.	disagree	10%
d.	strongly disagree	0%

15. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule, I have had____opportunities to have discussions with colleagues about curriculum and instruction.

a.	more	10%
b.	less	10%
c.	about the same	70%
*	none	10%

16. In terms of experimenting with new instructional approaches (peer coaching, cross-curricular teaching, cooperative and quantum learning etc.), I believe that compared to a traditional six-period schedule, I am

a.	doing more experimenting	60%
b.	doing less experimenting	10%
c.	doing about the same amount	30%

17. In terms of my motivating students, I believe that compared to a traditional six-period schedule, I am experiencing

a.	more success	50%
b.	about the same amount of success	40%
c.	less success	10%

18. Compared to a traditional six-period schedule, this year I am able to meet all my students' needs

a.	more effectively	20%
b.	about the same as in the past	40%
c.	less effectively	40%

19. In terms of establishing positive relationships with students, I have had____than in a traditional six-period schedule.

a. more success	50%
b. less success	10%
c. about the same success	40%

20. In terms of working cooperatively with one another on classroom tasks, students are experiencing____than in a traditional six-period schedule.

a. more success	60%
b. about the same success	40%
c. less success	0%

21. In terms of exhibiting positive relationships with their peers, students are experiencing____than in a traditional six-period schedule.

a. more success	50%
b. about the same success	40%
c. less success	10%

22. My students are actively engaged in classroom activities

a. more of the time	60%
b. sometimes	40%
c. rarely	0%
d. never	0%

23. Considering everything

a. I prefer to teach in an eight-block schedule	70%
b. I prefer to return to the six-period schedule	10%
c. I have no preference	20%

24. What strategies would you suggest to increase achievement at the targeted high school?

25. Through block schedule, if you could identify one aspect or activity that contributes to the effectiveness of your teaching what would it be ?

* Teacher additions.